



Animals in School Policy (incorporating the Dogs in School Policy)

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment

Governor's Committee Responsibility: Resources

Date Approved: Summer 2024

Review Period: 3 yearly

Next Review Date: Summer 2027

The Limpsfield Grange Values:

At Limpsfield Grange we believe in working together to make a difference.

We are a tolerant community; we accept, value and understand others.

We care for all members of our community without judgement.

We are responsible for our own learning, behaviour and actions.

We accept that sometimes things go wrong. We work together to take responsibility for our mistakes and for putting things right.

We are a respectful community and we treat others as we would like to be treated, even if they have different views and opinions to our own.

We understand that good behaviour helps us to prepare for life beyond Limpsfield Grange.

We are positive and resilient. We celebrate difference in everything that we do.

We are all proud to be part of the Limpsfield Grange community.

July 2023

Limpsfield Grange School

Animals in School Policy

Background and rationale

The Animals in School policy aims to outline to students, staff, parents and carers, Governors and members of our wider school community, how we work with animals for the benefit of the students at Limpsfield Grange.

Research has shown that interacting with animals triggers the release of the Oxytocin hormone which causes feelings of happiness and contentment. Anxiety levels decrease and children can become more willing to interact and communicate with people around them. The following learning, health and wellbeing benefits can be derived from working with animals:

- Animals can have a calming effect and can reduce levels of anxiety
- Students can become more motivated to think and learn as children generally have a high level of natural interest, enthusiasm and enjoyment of animals
- Students can develop a sense of responsibility through looking after animals
- Working with animals can teach students to nurture and respect life
- Working with animals can be pursued as a potential work or learning pathway for students

In particular reference to dogs, research studies in both Britain and America have concluded that having a dog in the classroom and wider school environment can have many positive benefits including:

- Helping to reduce anxiety
- Improving academic achievement
- Motivating those children who have a short attention span
- Teaching responsibility
- Encouraging students to respect life
- Giving positive reinforcement
- Encouraging communication

Dogs in the classroom offer our students solid, sound reassurance and can help to ease their sensory overload and also give them a focal point. Walking dogs gives students the opportunity to bond with an animal as well as giving them physical exercise. Students who read to the dogs gain confidence as dogs provide students with a sense of comfort and reassurance.

Aims of the policy

- To ensure that students, staff, Governors, parents and carers and members of the wider community can work safely alongside the animals at Limpsfield Grange.
- To ensure that animals at Limpsfield Grange are well looked after and cared for.
- To ensure that this policy integrates with other associated policies such as the Health and Safety policy.

Scope

This policy applies to all people who interact with the animals on the school site including students, staff, parents and carers, Governors, visitors, companies who hire our facilities and contractors.

The Limpsfield Grange smallholding

Limpsfield Grange believes that interaction with animals has a beneficial effect on our students and as such the smallholding was set up to allow this interaction. The smallholding and animals are an integral part of the education package at Limpsfield Grange and allow the students a calm and therapeutic place to go when life in the classroom becomes overwhelming.

To comply with current regulations the school's smallholding is registered with DEFRA (Department for Environment and Rural Affairs), Animal Health, Trading Standards, and the Rural Payments Agency. The school has its own CPH (County Parish Holding) number, SBI (Single Business Identifier) and Vendor Number. These regulations apply when keeping cloven footed animals and only apply to chickens and ducks when the number kept is over 50 in number, which is not the case at Limpsfield Grange.

The Premises Manager is registered as the Primary Contact when dealing with any of the above bodies and as such he must ensure all Animal Movement, Veterinary Medicine and Holding Registers are kept up to date. The Premises Manager is responsible for this policy and ensuring that it is compliant with all relevant legislation and guidance, including the bodies who the school's smallholding is registered with.

All animal information and registers are kept in a file in the Premises Managers office.

Our animals

We currently have the following animals in the school grounds:

- Goats
- Alpacas
- Sheep

We also have 6 dogs belonging to members of staff in school on a daily basis and live-in staff have both dogs and cats (dogs do not come into contact with students without supervision and the cats are kept indoors within the staff accommodation). The process for accepting new school animals and staff dogs is set out below.

Caring for our animals

At Limpsfield Grange we aim to promote good practice in animal care. Our Premises Manager has a farming background and is experienced in animal care; he is responsible for the welfare of the school animals and supervises students contact with animals (except staff dogs). Students are encouraged to take a shared responsibility for the care of the animals, under supervision and are taught how to interact with them correctly.

Animal related activities include:

- Daily walking of staff members dogs
- Goat walking
- Alpaca walking
- Daily feeding of animals
- Opportunities to learn outside of the classroom.

All activities are supervised by a member of staff.

Handling animals

To ensure animals become used to humans they should be handled as often as possible, the more they are handled the more trusting they will become.

Only students with the appropriate parental consent are allowed to handle the animals.

Students should only handle any of the school animals when supervised by a member of staff.

When handling animals, it is important that good hygiene is maintained.

When handling animals:

- No food and drink should be consumed.
- Any open cuts or abrasions on the exposed skin of hands and arms must be covered with waterproof adhesive dressings.
- Hands must be washed with soap and water or hand sanitizer before and directly after handling animals.
- Animals must be kept away from the face.

Careful handling of animals is most important and students are advised on how to approach the animals and how and where they should be touched. The animals should be restrained sufficiently so that they cannot damage themselves or the handler. Only suitably trained students should be allowed to walk the alpacas as they may “take flight” and may cause harm or damage to student accidentally.

Diseases, parasites and allergies

The likelihood of diseases being passed on to humans from animals is low; however allergic reactions to animals cannot be discounted. They may result from handling the animals or just being near them and be detected by the development of skin rashes, irritation to the eyes and nose or breathing difficulties. The thorough washing of hands immediately after contact with an animal should help. A parental consent form is obtained prior to students being allowed to interact with the animals and school staff watch for the development of any allergic reactions in students who come into contact with our animals. Students with known allergic reactions to specific animals must have restricted access to those that may trigger a response. In most cases an allergic reaction will subside once the animal and the affected person are kept apart; in extreme cases medical advice would be sought.

In order for there to be minimal risk to humans of diseases being transmitted the school ensures that all animals are obtained from reputable sources.

School visitors

The goats, sheep and alpacas at the front of the school are accessible to visitors, notices requesting that visitors do not touch the animals are clearly displayed.

Risk assessments

To minimize the likelihood of accidents or injuries risk assessments are carried out that cover all activities within the smallholding. As different types of animals have different levels and types of associated risk, and risk assessments are carried out for each species kept on the school site. School staff who bring their dogs in to

school are responsible for carrying out a risk assessment which must be approved by the Headteacher prior to the animal being brought on site. If an animal has a history of biting or scratching it should not be brought on site.

Risk assessments for the small holding and dogs are stored in the Premises Manager's office and reviewed annually or if there is an incident. They are also available in a everyone/risk assessments.

Animal health

The school is registered with a veterinary practice (currently Westpoint at Brasted, Kent) who have records of all smallholding animals kept at the school. If a smallholding animal is showing signs of ill health and the Premises Manager feels it necessary a vet will be called out. If one of the smallholding animals dies it must be disposed of following the correct procedures as set out by DEFRA. If the animal died due to a suspected disease a vet must be called for advice and the smallholding area must be put into quarantine.

It is not usual practice for the school to transport smallholding animals. Should it be necessary in the view of the Vet or the Headteacher then any such transport will be in accordance with DEFRA regulations.

Appropriate and secure housing is purchased according to the animal, to keep them safe and contained and ensure that our students' safety is maintained at all times.

Animals are given any appropriate inoculations and treatments as necessary. Students are kept away from any animals showing signs of infection. A log of issues and treatments given to the smallholding animals is available in a everyone/animal care.

Although students are involved with caring for the animals, cleaning out of the animals is carried out by school staff using the necessary protective equipment. Any disinfectants and cleaning products used during cleaning the animals housing will be safe to be used in the presence of children, though chemicals will not be used directly by them and will be kept out of reach at all times.

All feeding equipment such as bowls, bottles etc. will be cleaned and stored separately from human utensils in a suitable place away from students.

New animals

The Headteacher must be consulted before any new animals are brought into school and may decide to seek further advice before allowing the animal to come onto the school site. Typically, new animals will be acquired through donation.

New animals will only be accepted by the school if they have a full veterinarian history provided by a qualified vet, including vaccinations and previous illnesses.

Application process to bring a dog into school

- Permission must be sought from the Headteacher **before** bringing a dog into school. The Headteacher will determine whether the dog is suitable and the number of dogs that can safely be accommodated in school

- Staff dog owners must have signed to say they have read and understood the Dogs in School risk assessment.
- Staff dog owners must provide the School Business Manager with documentation to prove that their dog has been microchipped and vaccinated. The school will maintain a list of required vaccinations [in accordance with advice from the school vet].
- Staff dog owners must confirm that their dog is wormed and receives anti-flea and tick treatment every 12 weeks.
- Only dogs with a sociable nature who are tolerant of children will be allowed in school.
- This policy, and any approval to bring a dog on site, does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and the school may amend it at any time.

Dog register

If approval to bring the dog into school is granted then the owner's and dog's details must be entered on the dog register by the School Business Manager. The register will include relevant dates of vaccinations etc.

It is the dog owner's responsibility to ensure that the evidence is produced annually to show that vaccinations are up to date. Failure to do so will automatically invalidate any previous approval to bring the dog on to the school site.

Dog owners will adhere to the rules set out in Schedule 1 of this policy. Failure to adhere to any of these rules, may result in the Headteacher removing approval to have the animal onsite. In circumstances where, in the reasonable opinion of the Headteacher, a dog poses a risk to the safety of pupils, staff or other animals the dog owner must follow the instructions of the Headteacher, up to and including the immediate removal of the animal from the school site.

Accidents

Due to the nature of the outdoor environment and the unpredictability of animals, occasional accidents or injuries are inevitable. Full risk assessments must be undertaken for both the day-to-day activities in the smallholding and all types of animals brought into the school grounds.

If an accident or incident occurs it must be reported immediately and an accident form completed. Following the accident/incident the risk assessment that covers the area must be reviewed and amended as necessary to decrease the chance of repetition. Should the same type of accident/incident reoccur a review of that activity should take place and changes made or the activity discontinued.

If an injury occurs that requires first aid a suitably trained member of staff will administer initial first aid. If it is thought that the injury requires more than first aid a visit to the doctors will be arranged or an ambulance called. If an animal is repeatedly aggressive or bites or kicks arrangements should be made for its removal from the school site.

Insurance

For approved dogs who are in school for an educational purpose Surrey County Council insurance will indemnify the owner against any incidents whilst the animal is on the school premises (biting, scratching etc.) providing that the processes stated in this policy have been complied with. Surrey County Council insurance also covers incidents with animals in the smallholding.

Dog owners need to be aware of any students who do not have parental consent to be around dogs and also any students with a dog allergy.

Clothing and footwear

Correct clothing and footwear must be worn when undertaking external activities with the animals or in the smallholding. Parents should supply students with wellington boots for use when it is wet or muddy, waterproof coats should be worn when it is raining. Gloves should be worn when helping in animal clubs or when cleaning animal building out.

Smallholding funding

The school provides an environment budget for animal feed, fencing, housing and vet bills. Grants are applied for whenever possible to help provide new animals or equipment.

This policy will be monitored through:

- The Site Manager observations of the small holdings
- Weekly Senior Leadership meetings
- Regular monitoring by the School Business Manager
- Headteacher reports to Governors (whenever necessary)

Related links

- <https://www.hse.gov.uk/legislation/hswa.htm>
- <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1991/961/contents/made>
- <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/45/contents>
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/standards-for-school-premises>
- <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/45/contents>

Related policies and documents:

- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Infection Control Policy
- Dog Register
- Dogs in School Risk Assessment
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Student Health and Medication Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually, and additionally in the case of the following:

- Serious or frequent breaches of the Animals in School Policy
- New guidance from DEFRA (Department for Environment and Rural Affairs), Animal Health, Trading Standards
- Advice from the Police

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| The Governing Body of Limpsfield Grange School adopted this policy on: | |
| It will be reviewed on: | |
| Signed | |
| Dated | |

APPENDIX 1

Rules for Dog Owners on Site

- Dogs must be supervised at all times whilst on the premises. If dogs are left alone in work areas, they must be restrained by baby gates, locked doors and/or crates.
- Dogs must be on a lead in the school building, in the playground, in the car park or in the immediate vicinity of the school building between 7.30am – 5pm Monday to Friday, term time only.
- Water, comforts and food must be provided for the dog.
- Any dog displaying aggressive or distressed behaviour will be removed immediately from the premises.
- Dog owners must ensure that any excrement is cleaned up immediately and thoroughly and disposed of responsibly and hygienically.
- Owners may be required to pay for any incidental cleaning requirements, damage and repairs to the building structure or furnishings caused by their dog.
- The dog should be clean, regularly groomed and have its claws trimmed.
- Owners must ensure that the dog does not come into contact with any students or staff who have objected to its presence.
- Owners are responsible for ensuring toys, bowls, etc. do not pose a slip/trip hazard and that any water spillage is attended to immediately.
- Dogs must not enter the main kitchen, Food Technology kitchen or swimming pool.
- Any dog related incidents must be reported to a member of the Senior Leadership Team immediately. Any accidents will be treated in accordance with the section on Accidents in the Animals in School Policy as well as the Health Safety Policy.
- Owners are responsible for ensuring that their working areas are 'dog proofed' to ensure their animals do not chew on waste or any form of office equipment (i.e. electric wire, cords, carpet, etc.)
- Any dog who is ill or infectious must be kept in residential accommodation or off-site until they are well.

Failure to comply with this policy and the associated risk assessment may result in the permission to bring the dog into school being withdrawn. This would not be considered a breach of terms and conditions of employment